



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Insurance Building, PO Box 43113 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3113 • (360) 902-0555

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 28, 2005

Washington State growth gains momentum

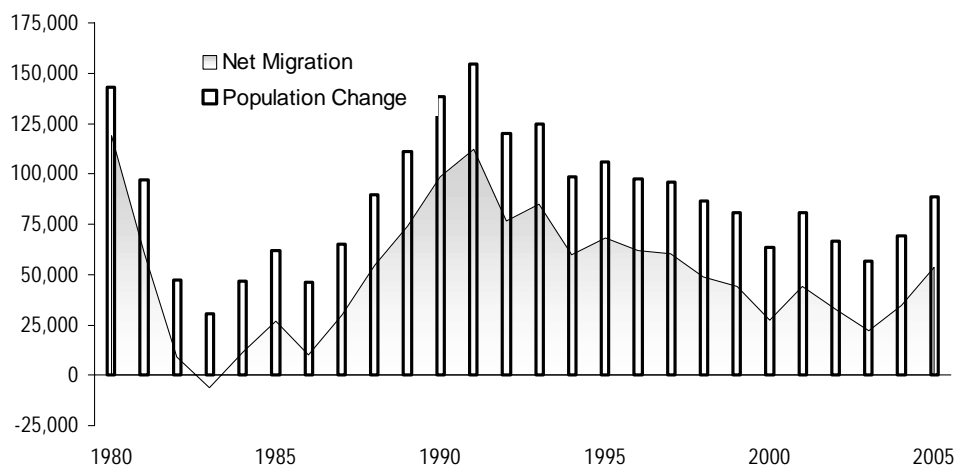
OLYMPIA – Reflecting a stronger economy, Washington State’s population has grown by an estimated 88,600 people, or a healthy 1.4 percent, in the past year, Theresa Lowe, the state’s chief demographer, said Tuesday.

Population growth hasn’t been this robust since the early 1990s, Lowe said. It compares to an increase in 2004 of 68,500, or 1.1 percent. The 2005 estimate, prepared annually by the State Office of Financial Management, pushes Washington’s population to 6,256,400 as of April 1.

“The growth represents the solid rebound we have been anticipating, which is in line with an economic recovery.” Lowe said.

Population gains usually follow employment increases by six to 12 months. The state’s payroll and employment figures began to improve in 2003 with a slight 0.2 percent increase, with 2004 payroll and employment showing a substantially larger gain of 1.7 percent, Lowe added.

State growth on the move



“Again, where we go from here depends on how Washington’s economic recovery stacks up against what other states have to offer in terms of job opportunities,” Lowe said.

In this respect, the state is a good prospect for continued economic growth, given the strength of the housing market, increasing foreign exports, and the recovery of the state’s aerospace industry. The state population forecast shows growth increasing from the current annual level of nearly 89,000 to 100,000 per year by 2008 and remaining at about that level through 2010.

The Census 2000 population count marks the baseline for tracking a new decade of population change in the state. The majority of growth since 2000 remains concentrated in Western Washington, with the largest five-year gains being increases of 71,254 in King County, 55,082 in Pierce County, 49,776 in Snohomish County and 46,262 in Clark County.

The fastest growing counties, in terms of percent change since the 2000 Census, are Franklin County (22.6 percent), Clark County (13.4 percent), Benton County (11.0 percent) and San Juan County (10.1 percent).

The population of Washington’s cities and towns totaled 3,817,518 on April 1 this year, up 297,968 over the 2000 federal census count. Annexations and incorporations account for about 118,700 of this increase. There have been no new incorporations since the Spokane Valley incorporation in March 2003.

Detailed information on the April 1, 2005, population estimates for cities, towns and counties may be found on the Office of Financial Management web page at www.ofm.wa.gov.

The federal Bureau of the Census is expected to release July 1, 2004 city population estimates for all of the states on June 30, 2005. To avoid confusion, please note that these population estimates have a July 1 estimate date and lag the office of Financial Management population estimates by nearly a year.

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Contact: Theresa Lowe, Office of Financial Management, 360-902-0588